

CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

Interview with **MARGERY AND BARRY PASSETT**
Conducted by **BETTY KING**

Margery and Barry Passett were leaders and Democratic activists in Ward 3. Margery organized the ward for Marion Barry's 1978 campaign. The next year she went to work for the then Hogan and Hartson law firm as a Legislative Specialist predominantly working on international trade matters. Barry participated in Barry's campaigns for Board of Educations and City Council and was Margery's assistant in the 1978 campaign. In 1979 he became President of the Greater Southeast Health Care System, providing medical services to the people of Ward 8. In that role, he was closely tied to the Barry Administration for the duration of the 1980s.

October 21, 2015

BETTY KING: All right. We can begin. It seems to be working. Today is the 21st of October 2015. My name is Betty King. And I am here with Margery Passett and Barry Passett.

When did you all come to the District?

BARRY PASSETT: 1961.

BETTY KING: And you were doing what?

BARRY PASSETT: I came down to work in the Alliance for Progress. Actually, I would have taken anything in the Kennedy administration that was reasonable, but I got a wonderful break, and I got a job at the Alliance for Progress [which was initiated by President Kennedy in 1961 to establish economic cooperation between the U.S. and Latin America].

BETTY KING: And when did you meet Marion Barry?

MARGERY PASSETT: We went away and then came back in '71.

BETTY KING: You went?

MARGERY PASSETT: To Trenton, New Jersey.

BETTY KING: And then you came back again in?

BARRY PASSETT: '71.

MARGERY PASSETT: '71.

BETTY KING: In '71? And was that when you met Marion?

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah.

BETTY KING: And he was then a member of the School Board, if I'm not mistaken.

MARGERY PASSETT: No.

BARRY PASSETT: Not yet.

BETTY KING: Oh.

BARRY PASSETT: Other things that we forgot last time is that there were three campaigns—School Board, then Council, then Mayor—all a couple of years—

BETTY KING: Apart.

BARRY PASSETT: —from each other. And therefore—this is running ahead a little bit—by the time the mayoral campaign came along, people were mobilized. In other words, you had organization that would never have been possible to just dream up for a mayoral campaign. We already had the people in place who had been through a very difficult School Board campaign, a breeze of a Council campaign, and then we're ready for the mayoralty.

BETTY KING: So you helped him on his campaign for the School Board.

BARRY PASSETT: Thanks to Nancy Linton [a political activist in Ward 3], yes.

BETTY KING: And then you worked on his Council campaign?

BARRY PASSETT: Yes. Yes.

BETTY KING: As coordinators of Ward 3?

MARGERY PASSETT: Yeah.

BETTY KING: In what capacity?

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't remember.

BARRY PASSETT: I don't remember what the capacity was.

BETTY KING: But you did—you worked on—

BARRY PASSETT: I did work—yeah.

BETTY KING: Now, there were two Council campaigns. There was '74, when he got elected to the—that was the first Council.

BARRY PASSETT: Yes.

BETTY KING: And they drew straws because they wanted staggered terms to see who got 2 years and who got 4 years. He got 2 years, so he ran again in '76.

BARRY PASSETT: I'll amend what I was saying earlier, that there were three prior campaigns before you came to the big one, and so there was plenty of exercise.

BETTY KING: Now, through all of these campaigns—we'll talk about four, two for the Council, one for the School Board, and then the one for Mayor—what was it that set Marion Barry apart for you from all the others?

MARGERY PASSETT: He was active, he was involved, he was bright, he was, I thought, electable. I always like to work on winning campaigns.

BETTY KING: Yeah. Great.

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't even remember who ran against him.

BARRY PASSETT: Well, through all of that, starting with the School Board, he was able to articulate a vision. People forget that he articulated a vision very well in the early days. He was able to convince people that things in the District did not have to be the way they were, that is, the schools did not have to be as bad as they were. It turns out he was wrong. But they didn't have to be as bad as they were. And it turned out that there were a whole number of things in the city that could be done better, mainly if you opened up the city government to all the talent that was in the city, and he was holding himself out as the example of somebody who could never have gotten a job in city government early on, before Pride [a youth training and employment program established by Barry], and now look, he was running for Mayor or running for the Council, one or the other, and things were possible. He was the great purveyor of the possible.

BETTY KING: Great. So now we've come to 1978 or probably you were talking to him about the campaign in '77, but at any rate, what was the role that you all played in the '78 campaign? Margery, you were the coordinator of Ward 3.

MARGERY PASSETT: Yeah. Marion and Ivanhoe came over and suggested that this team effort was not working for them. They wanted one person to do Ward 3, and since Barry was working about an hour away, it became me. So, I was Ward 3 coordinator.

BETTY KING: So you became the Ward 3 coordinator. And did you have your own sort of coterie of people that you turned to, to help you recruit others and so forth?

MARGERY PASSETT: Well, what happened was I was fairly new to Ward 3 politics. I had not been in the Polly [Shackleton, first City Council member from Wars 3] fights or anything. And there was a whole group, of which you were one, that were originally Polly people, and you were a great team, you were friends, you had worked together for years. I just wasn't part of that, number one. And number two, I was very anxious that there be a Ward 3 for Marion Barry, not a Polly Shackleton Ward 3 for Marion Barry.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: So it was a question of building an organization essentially from scratch.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: I mean, there were people, certainly the Polly people, wonderfully helpful, but it was street by street actually.

BETTY KING: Yeah. But, of course, Polly was running for reelection that year, but unopposed, and she and Bob went away for a long vacation in the summer, so her—

MARGERY PASSETT: I remember that.

[Laughter.]

BETTY KING: She wasn't—you know, there was a lot of energy amongst those of us who were great Polly supporters.

MARGERY PASSETT: Yeah. Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. Well, you're all fabulous, it's just I—

BETTY KING: No, I—

MARGERY PASSETT: —should be an independent organization.

BETTY KING: Yeah. Well, and there was no—as far as I recall, when Polly did come back from vacation, and Lee Carty [supporter of Barry's opponent Council Chairman Sterling Tucker] and Phil Hart [well known Democratic pollster] convinced her to endorse Sterling, there was no mad

exodus of Polly people from the Barry campaign. By that time, it seems to me we were all pretty committed.

MARGERY PASSETT: That was very late in the campaign.

BETTY KING: Yeah, it was.

MARGERY PASSETT: It was—I just—whenever I think of it, I think of Charlie Segal [a young volunteer on the Barry campaign], who I don't know if it was high school or early college, but he was so dedicated both to Polly and to Marion, he worked so hard for Marion, and I remember him sitting in the office staring into space because Polly had left the field, and I remember talking to him and explaining to him that the organization for Marion was still intact, he was going to be all right, and I knew how he felt, but it was devastating to a lot of people.

BETTY KING: Yeah. Yeah. That was a setback. So, what were our numbers in Ward 3 in that? Did we sweep Ward 3?

MARGERY PASSETT: Yes. I forgot what the numbers were, but definitely.

BETTY KING: It was huge. Did you see a lot of activity from the Walter Washington [incumbent mayor and candidate for reelection in 1978] and the Sterling Tucker people?

MARGERY PASSETT: I did not. I did not.

BARRY PASSETT: [Laughs.]

BETTY KING: You laugh, but, I mean, I ask this question of all the ward coordinators, and with the exception of Ward 5, they've all said, no, no, there wasn't much.

BARRY PASSETT: Where were they?

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't. Ward 3 people were working very, very hard. I don't remember anyone telling me, "Gosh, all these Sterling people are out here." Nothing like that.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: There were some Sterling people out—

MARGERY PASSETT: Well, Sterling voters, sure.

BARRY PASSETT: No, no, I mean—

MARGERY PASSETT: Working?

BETTY KING: Lee Carty was involved, and so she had some of Polly's people with her.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah.

BETTY KING: She was chair of Sterling's campaign, I think.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. The thing that was so shocking was that Walter Washington, as the incumbent—and with a bunch of the real old—now that I'm their age, I realize how old they were—but some of the old political players in town were purportedly his people and they were invisible. You know, they did absolutely nothing. Sterling did have—he had a campaign, but I think it's a classic—that was a classic thing. Marion was so young and so far left that I think Walter felt—no, the average voter in Ward 4, you know, middle-aged school teacher, she's not going to vote for him, and so we can coast.

MARGERY PASSETT: What about Sterling? I mean, they would vote for—

BARRY PASSETT: I think Sterling did a little bit more. They would vote for Sterling. And so, again, you know, you don't know what in the world they were thinking.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: I just don't know what they were thinking at that time. Those are the people you should be interviewing, is to find out why they—

BETTY KING: We're going to. [Laughs.]

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. You know, find out why they didn't raise any alarm bells, especially once it was clear that it was a three-way race and that each of the players, as it turned out, was very accurate, each of the players sort of had a niche that was exploitable, and you could drive that niche and get a lot of votes.

And the other thing about Marion that is very important, I think, to remember is that he was the far left candidate. Walter, my goodness, and Sterling, even worse, he was the far left candidate. In Ward 3, you had all these white liberals who had just come off of the McCarthy, the good McCarthy, Gene McCarthy—

MARGERY PASSETT: Gene.

BARRY PASSETT: —Gene McCarthy [presidential] campaign, and the Bobby Kennedy [presidential] campaign, and they were looking for—

BETTY KING: And the George McGovern campaign [for President in 1972].

BARRY PASSETT: Well, yeah, I mean, yeah, okay, that's right, that's right. Those of us who died in that disaster, yes. Yeah. But they were looking for something else. They weren't going to find it from Sterling or from Walter.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: And so Marion was the clear heir to that energy and all-in-all. As a matter of fact, one could say that he didn't get enough of that vote, you know, because there were thousands of people in the District who had lived through, just lived through, that era. Remember, we've got to put ourselves back in the time that it was, and that we had just lived through that era, and people needed a champion who could stand in the light of those people, and Marion held himself out that way, and the other guys carefully did not, you know, they carefully did not. They did not want to be perceived as left wing because then the Congress would stop them. You know, they had a very mature look at what was going on in the District.

People forget—again, another thing that we forget is that the Congress of that day was just as bad as the Congress of this day. The difference was that the bad guys were called Democrats. And, you know, so now the bad guys are Republicans. But in those days, there were the southern Democratic Senators and Congressmen who were waiting to bash the District, and did. And so, both Walter and Sterling were very cautious, and Marion took the risk of going far, essentially far, left.

BETTY KING: Some of the worst of that southern Democrats running the District of Columbia had broken up by the time we got home rule in '74, but it was still something to be apprehensive about.

MARGERY PASSETT: I was going to say, the District wasn't that used to elections either.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: So, you know, maybe they didn't realize you have to organize. [Laughs.]

BETTY KING: Well, and another thing that probably lulled Walter and Sterling into complacency was the fact that there wasn't a single solitary poll, professional poll, that showed us winning.

BARRY PASSETT: Right. Right.

MARGERY PASSETT: But a highlight of the campaign was when the *Washington Post* came out for Marion. We were at Pat Sheehy's house [one of Marion's supporters]. That was

spectacular. I don't know if they up there working after that or not. It must have come as quite a shock to them. Actually, it was a shock to me.

BETTY KING: Yeah. No, it was. We were at a candidates' forum in that school that's—the elementary school or the middle school that's near Wilson High.

MARGERY PASSETT: Deal?

BETTY KING: Deal. Okay. There was a candidates' forum at Deal, and as we were leaving, Bob Washington [attorney and chairman of the DC Democratic Party], who was in Sterling's camp, said to me, "You all are going to be so crushed."

[Laughter.]

BETTY KING: Bitsy Folger [fundraiser and active Barry supporter] and I got in my car, we went down to the *Post* because we thought that—we had been checking it out almost every day, and we picked up the newspaper with the endorsements that same night.

[Laughter.]

BETTY KING: Oh, gosh.

MARGERY PASSETT: And brought it to Pat Sheehy's.

BARRY PASSETT: Geez, that's funny, I just bumped into Bitsy just the other day, and I should have remembered that anecdote because I would have shared it again.

MARGERY PASSETT: I talked to her about it. I talked to her about it. I tried to get her to call you.

BETTY KING: Well, we've talked, and she's—we'll talk about it later off mike. So, we're at the Harambee House Hotel celebrating Marion's victory in the primary. And were you all there?

MARGERY PASSETT: We must have been. I don't remember, and my son doesn't remember.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah, we must have been. I remember one after another big party there. I remember Sharon Pratt's [elected DC Mayor in 1990] election party because it—I remember that. But I don't really have a good—

BETTY KING: You were probably so exhausted by the end of the day that you—

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. Yeah. I'm not one for election parties.

BETTY KING: Yeah, but that was—

MARGERY PASSETT: I can't believe I didn't go.

BARRY PASSETT: That was very special.

BETTY KING: That was a special one.

MARGERY PASSETT: It was so incredible.

BETTY KING: I bet you did at least make a cameo appearance.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah, wait a minute, though. Now, tracking back, it wasn't early in the evening that the returns were in and cleared. That was a very unclear—because it was so close.

BETTY KING: Yeah, but I think that by 9:00 the word was out that it was a third, a third, and a third, except our third was bigger than anybody else's third. And as it happened, I think it was—we won by a factor of 3,000 votes or something. So, it was a—and, of course, it was at a time when the Board of Elections was in a mess, and our—

BARRY PASSETT: Shocking.

BETTY KING: Shocking.

[Laughter.]

BETTY KING: And our elections were, you know, sort of Chinese water torture until you found out what was really—

BARRY PASSETT: That's what—yeah.

BETTY KING: But we were celebrating that evening not on a wing and a prayer, but on some really substantial information that we had in fact made it. So—

MARGERY PASSETT: We might have stayed home with the kids because they were so active in the campaign.

BETTY KING: Oh.

BARRY PASSETT: That's what Alex remembers.

MARGERY PASSETT: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: We checked with our oldest son, who remembers what he had for breakfast in 1977, so—

MARGERY PASSETT: And why he didn't like it.

[Laughter.]

BARRY PASSETT: And he said that he stayed home.

MARGERY PASSETT: I know he did.

BARRY PASSETT: And that he—I guess he said he watched it on television or listened to it on the radio. And so, that's what sort of made me uncertain about what we had done. He had worked—

MARGERY PASSETT: He had worked very hard.

BARRY PASSETT: —so he had worked on the campaign, so, you know, he should have been there.

BETTY KING: So the campaign is over for the primary, but you were starting a real job then.

MARGERY PASSETT: Yes.

BETTY KING: So you didn't coordinate Ward 3 for the general election, or did you?

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't know. I don't think it was our job.

[Laughter.]

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't remember. The organization was there, so they probably just kept it going.

BETTY KING: Yeah. So, Marion—

BARRY PASSETT: Was there a Republican?

BETTY KING: Yes.

MARGERY PASSETT: No.

BETTY KING: Fletcher?

MARGERY PASSETT: Fletcher.

BARRY PASSETT: Arthur Fletcher.

BETTY KING: Arthur Fletcher.

BARRY PASSETT: Arthur Fletcher. Yes. I—

BETTY KING: Yeah, but, I mean—

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah, no—

BETTY KING: And the fundraising and the vote raising, everything became very, very much easier.

BARRY PASSETT: Right.

BETTY KING: So you went into the private sector. You didn't—

MARGERY PASSETT: Right.

BETTY KING: You weren't looking for a job in the government. But—and you were not—you were in the private sector also, but you worked very closely with the Barry administration during those early years.

BARRY PASSETT: Well, yeah, no, I—that is a very intricate story, and it's not—I can't do it all, you know, I can't do the whole thing. I was working in Maryland, I was working in Baltimore, when all this was going on. And in the way that the world works, I had my eyes set on taking over the Greater Southeast Hospital System. I really wanted to do that for a lot of reasons. And it turned out that in the beginning of 1979, that Marion was inaugurated at the beginning of '79, and not a couple of months later the job at Greater Southeast came open, and he and I—I'm trying to think of the word for it, setting up a cabal—we worked together to get me to get that job and then to link what was being done at Greater Southeast to a whole number of initiatives that he was interested in. And it's a very—and then we become completely embraced by D.C. politics. See, I wanted to build low-income housing, I wanted to start a day care, things that it's hard to do. I built a nursing home. There was no nursing home east of the Anacostia. All of these things required his assent, and in some cases, his help, but the assent was critical. And, yeah, so suddenly after the election, we became partners, in quotes, and so which very—

BETTY KING: Excuse me.

[Clicking sound.]

BETTY KING: Okay. So, you're at Greater Southeast, and you're collaborating with Marion. Tell me—and you're seeing pretty intimately what's going on inside his administration and how he is doing the things that he wanted to do. So, in addition to what he did with you, he had a lot of other visions for the city.

BARRY PASSETT: Oh, yes.

BETTY KING: And maybe you could talk a bit about that.

BARRY PASSETT: Well, disappointment first, and then I'll talk about the good stuff. Shut that thing off for a minute. Can you shut that so can we go off the record for a moment?

BETTY KING: Okay.

[Clicking sound.]

BARRY PASSETT: When Marion and I could talk about an issue, he was always supportive of what we were doing. The big thing was building the nursing home, the first one, because that would impact the city budget through Medicaid. There would be a lot more Medicaid spending if 200 people would go into a brand-new nursing home and have to be paid for, you know, all of that would have to be paid for. Marion was fine.

I had Ivanhoe [Donaldson, Barry's 1978 campaign manager and later his Chief of Staff] said to me, "What are you doing messing around with that hospital over east of the river when all the action is downtown? If you want to be in the action, you've got to be downtown, because that's where we're building and doing and all of that." And so, I had to be very careful on what I brought up through the chain of the city government, and since I was doing everything. We were trying to build a whole public service system in the private sector because there was not another public sector. And once I realized that there wasn't going to be one in the public sector, that meant we had to triple our efforts in order to get a lot of this stuff done. We did, and it got done, and there was no real harm, but that's because we got off to a fast start, we got off to a fast start.

If I had tried to do some of the things that I did from '79 to '82, later, it would have been—it never would have worked. It never would have worked because by that time, Marion's attention had completely shifted, completely shifted, and we would have been up—basically, we really would have been up against it.

And it turns out that my developer partner—I had a developer partner who was a friend of Marion's, Conrad Monts, and he wanted to build housing, which we did, and he wanted to do the day care thing, which with great trepidation we did since he didn't know anything about day care, but he wanted to do it anyhow, and so we did it. And had a real uphill battle again because there he was in Ward 8, and forget about Ward 8, what are you going to do downtown? So, then he shifted some of his energy to downtown and developed some projects that went nowhere in the big downtown redevelopment scheme.

It was—well, anyhow, all of that was obviously post-election, and most of it was before the first reelection, and after that, things just sort of spiraled downhill, as he spiraled downhill.

BETTY KING: You mean as far as your project was concerned?

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. As far as my ability to get stuff started that required anything out of the city outside of, you know, licenses and those stuff.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: But if it meant a commitment from the city for money going down the road—well, sometimes I was able to work with people who had a different entry to Marion and to Ivanhoe. One example just popped into my head, a really interesting example, and that was that Al Goldson, who later was to—he was a radiation oncologist at Howard [University Hospital] and an absolutely world-class physician, and he was later to provide service to Marion when Marion had his prostate cancer, and to Louie Farrakhan, but that's another anecdote.

Goldson wanted to open a big radiation oncology center for poor people in Ward 8, and he wanted to do it on our campus, since he was on my medical staff, and nobody said no, nobody said no to Al Goldson, and he did it, and we did it. And had he not had a very premature demise, he would be running it today because it was the kind of radical thing that Marion of 1979 would have grooved on. Later on, he grudgingly said okay, and it got done, but he would have grooved on it because the thought of radiation oncology, which at the time was a very expensive and very elite treatment for cancer, and you put that for poor people in Ward 8? Come on. You know, most people in the suburbs didn't have that yet. So, it got done.

BETTY KING: And Marion's attention had turned to developing downtown? Is that what you're suggesting?

BARRY PASSETT: That was early on his attention had gone to developing downtown, and then after, you know, we're into the second and third term, his attention had turned. You know, you didn't know where he was and what he was interested in, and he wasn't going to tell you. I remember, I think it was David Remnick [*Washington Post* reporter], of all people, interviewing

me and saying to me, "Well, you know he's a cocaine addict," and my saying to him—and talk about relationship right here—saying to him, "I do not know that he is a cocaine addict." I said, "If you know, you put it on the record," I said, "But I don't know, and so while I think some of his behavior is a little bit bizarre, I don't know what's causing that, and go find another source."

BETTY KING: But it seems to me that at some point, for each of you, there came a tipping point in which your close friendship and strong support for Marion began to go away, to evaporate. Is that not correct?

BARRY PASSETT: The New Year's dinner first. So, start at the top.

MARGERY PASSETT: The New Year's dinner?

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: You—

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah, yeah. Start at the top and take that question down to—

MARGERY PASSETT: That was before. That was '78.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: We had Effi and Marion over for dinner, New Year's Day, yeah. They were not married yet.

BETTY KING: No. They got married in July of '78.

MARGERY PASSETT: And Effi was saying something to the effect of it seems very hard, this election, and I remember saying to her, "I would like to tell you it's going to get easier, but it's going to get much harder," as it did. She had a rough time. I don't know why we're talking about that.

BARRY PASSETT: Well, it—

MARGERY PASSETT: Well, okay. So, I was friendly with Effi. I really, really liked her a lot.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: And the tipping point for me—well, of course, things were going downhill. '82, I had an operation, so I couldn't do anything [in Marion's reelection campaign], and did nothing.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: I don't know when it was. Things were obviously going downhill anyway with the administration and with the race relations. He was making some pretty awful comments that were not helping the unity of the city, shall we say, but one day, one night, he stopped over—

BARRY PASSETT: Oh.

MARGERY PASSETT: —and for some reason we were all watching TV, I think it was *Roots*, I can't remember, but we were all in the recreation room, very rare, and he came in, and we chatted for a while, and then he asked if he could use the telephone. In hindsight, I should have told him to go upstairs or something, but I was naive. Anyway, he called some woman, and he wanted to go over to her apartment or house or whatever, and she didn't want him to. And it went on for it seemed to me a half an hour of his pleading, and there are my three kids sitting there, because, as you know, kids hear everything, and that was the end for me. Effi was still around at the time, and it was—that did it. It went over the top.

BETTY KING: Yeah. And—

BARRY PASSETT: Well, I had—my problem was that I had a board at Greater Southeast, and my board members, except for Carolyn Lewis, who was still caring, Carolyn was the most farsighted person in my—

BETTY KING: Carolyn who?

BARRY PASSETT: Carolyn Lewis.

BETTY KING: Oh, Carolyn Lewis [member of DC Commission for Women, employed at the Securities and Exchange Commission]. Oh, yes.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. She constantly said the city is more important, he's got problems, he's got problems, but the city is more important, so we support him. And, you know, her view was she would straighten him out, which was terribly arrogant because she did not straighten him out—

MARGERY PASSETT: They were very close, though.

BARRY PASSETT: —and they had a very tempestuous relationship because of her attempts to straighten him out, and his resistance. But I had a board made up half of D.C. middle class professionals and half of Prince George's County lower middle class and working class people—

BETTY KING: You were serving both constituencies.

BARRY PASSETT: That's right. They were my—so the board represented the community.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

BARRY PASSETT: I took a lot of effort to make that transition from what had been an all Prince George's County board with Carolyn and to a sort of 50-50 split. Well, by 19—well, I don't know, early in Marion's tenure, my Prince George's County constituents were totally off the reservation, "Why, that guy, that racist, we can't put up with him," kind of thing. And my D.C.—these were mostly white people, but not entirely, and the D.C. people were all blacks, and they were split. Those with strong middle class values were with the Prince George's County people, and those, the very few, like three or four, who had been with Marion and sort of were still with him.

So, I had a split board, and the split was negative. And my board members, being the way they were, were not bashful about saying, "We don't want anything to do with him," as the years went on. As we went through the '80s, they got more and more difficult. And for me, I tried to be an honest broker in the middle of all that, but then there was a day when Marion had done something egregiously—

MARGERY PASSETT: He came to some meeting.

BARRY PASSETT: —awful, and then he showed up at an event I was holding, and the whole board was there. I can't remember what the event was, but the board was there. And he came in, and the question was, what was he doing there? He had not been invited. And I was a little bit taken aback that he even knew about it because it was in—I think it was held in Oxon Hill, I think we were up in Oxon Hill, and hiding there, and he showed up, and I did not introduce him. I did not introduce him. And he came and took the microphone and said some things that were clearly evidence that he was not sober—

BETTY KING: Oh, dear.

BARRY PASSETT: —that he was clearly—which only reinforced the bad feeling among the board members. So, that was my—that was when it tipped for me because I just—when you cannot—as is always the case with addicts, if you cannot—once you cannot reason with them, they are over the line, you know. If you can reason with them, reason with them, and then there comes a day you can't, and that was that day.

BETTY KING: As far as you were concerned.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. Yeah.

BETTY KING: But in the long run—

BARRY PASSETT: Can I have a splash now that I've made my speech?

MARGERY PASSETT: [Laughs.]

BETTY KING: In the long run, do either of you feel that it was a mistake to elect Marion or—

MARGERY PASSETT: No, not at the time it wasn't a mistake. I'm not sure what happened to him frankly. I don't know. He was in my house many, many, many times and never took as much as a sip of wine, and all of a sudden—I don't know. Do you know what happened?

BETTY KING: No, I don't, but what I'm trying to get at, in sum, I mean, of course, there were things that you have described and have touched on that were very good reasons to feel that he had not fulfilled what you dreamed of when you got him elected, but it wasn't all black, was it?

MARGERY PASSETT: No. The first term I thought was quite good.

BETTY KING: Yeah.

MARGERY PASSETT: I really believed in him. And something happened, and I'm sorry, but the '78 race I have no regrets at all.

BARRY PASSETT: Right. Right. But on the other hand, his descent lead to a great deal of cynicism, real cynicism, throughout the city, including—everywhere but in Ward 8, the place that he didn't have any time for and then became the champion of, which is so wonderfully ironic that the people who feel—who felt that they were misunderstood, losers but still misunderstood losers, and they then flocked to him because the perception was that he was misunderstood even though he exhibited the traits of a loser, there was something noble there.

MARGERY PASSETT: He never acted like a loser.

BARRY PASSETT: That's right.

MARGERY PASSETT: Mayor for life.

BARRY PASSETT: Yeah. Yeah. And so, you know—

BETTY KING: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add to our narrative? No.

BARRY PASSETT: What did we forget from last time? There was a lot of stuff from last time that I have no recollection of, we were just firing away. But I hope we got all the points.

BETTY KING: I think we did. Thank you very much for talking to me.